

STATINTL

Approved For Release 1999/09/17 : CIA-RDP75-00149

Form 100-100
Page 1 Page 2 Page 3

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
STATES & ITEM

E-161,094

JAN 4 1957

Bay of Pigs Pilot Blames
Defect on Air Cover Lack

A pilot who took part in the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 said in New Orleans that the "key to the failure was the decision to withhold air support of the invasion troops."

Albert "Buck" Persons, a former Birmingham, Ala., newsman, was here to meet with the publishers of his book on the invasion entitled "The Day the Eagle Died" scheduled to be released in early spring.

IN THE book, he said he regrets much that has been stated by government officials on the invasion.

During an interview at the Royal Orleans Hotel, Persons said "it was obvious from the start that the whole operation was engineered and supported by the United States government."

He said he believes the invasion would have had a good chance for success if the last minute decision to alter air cover had been made.

He added that although President John F. Kennedy had taken personal blame for the failure of the invasion "no more blame should rest on his shoulders than it would on any per-

son who was in the position of highest authority at the time."

WHILE in New Orleans, Persons also met with Alberto Fowler, a native of Cuba who lives here now and was part of the ground force in the Bay of Pigs Invasion. It was the first time Persons had met a member of the ground force.

Persons said he was employed for the mission by agents of an exile group which obviously was working for the U.S. government although no one identified himself as a government representative or C.I.A. agent.

He said he was asked originally to fly by Maj. Gen. Reid Doster, commanding officer of the 117th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing of the Air Guard in Birmingham.

STATINTL

CPYRIGHT